

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 5, 1998**

The Accrediting Authority Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Thursday November 5, 1998 at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) via teleconference. The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. John Anderson of the Illinois EPA, Division of Laboratories. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B.

**INTRODUCTION**

Mr. John Anderson, Chair, welcomed new committee member Mr. Louis Johnson and all the other participants to this committee session. Mr. Johnson is a division administrator with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.

The chair announced that any proposed revisions to Chapter 6 need to be submitted to the NELAC Executive Secretary, Elizabeth Dutrow, no later than November 20, 1998. Therefore, all proposed wording changes would have to be finalized at this committee teleconference.

Mr. Anderson noted that Action Items 1, 4 and 5 listed in Attachment A to the Summary of the Accrediting Authority Committee Meeting, June 30, 1998, had been completed. At this meeting the committee needs to act upon Action Items 2, 3 and 6.

**SPECIFIC ISSUES**

After discussion, the committee decided to recommend that the following definition of a “governmental laboratory” (see Action Item 2 in the Summary of the of the June 30, 1998 committee meeting) be added to the NELAC glossary:

“Governmental laboratory” means a laboratory where the employees are directly paid and managed by a governmental entity. If a laboratory is owned by a governmental entity but the employees at that facility are paid directly and managed by a private organization, that laboratory is defined as a private laboratory.

The Ad Hoc National NELAC Database Committee asked that language be added to chapter 6 that requires NELAP-recognized accrediting authorities to update the NELAP national data base in a timely fashion so that the current status of accredited laboratories could be readily available to all interested parties. After discussion, the committee decided to propose the following addition to Chapter 6 at 6.3.3.1.1 (d) setting forth this requirement for all NELAP-recognized accrediting authorities:

“The accrediting authority shall have a policy and procedure for updating the NELAP national database with the NELAP-required information specific to the laboratories for which that

accrediting authority is the primary or secondary accrediting authority. These updates must occur within the following time-frames:

1. daily for those accrediting authorities with an automated e-mail system or automated batch processing that occurs even when the system is unattended, or
2. weekly for those accrediting authorities that are posting interactively.”

Following up on a suggestion received at the June 30, 1998, committee meeting (see Action Item 3 in Attachment A to the summary of that meeting), the committee discussed the relative advantages of changing the phrase used in Chapter 6 to describe an accredited laboratory from “NELAP accredited” to “accredited to the NELAC standard”. The committee members concluded that they could see no significant advantage to changing the wording, and agreed that no change would be recommended at this time.

The committee understands that a suggestion has been made to move a portion of Section 6.8 to Chapter 4. The committee generally concurs that if all of the requirements currently set forth in Section 6.8 are moved to Chapter 4, these requirements probably would be more appropriately included in Chapter 4. The committee decided to defer action on this issue until the NELAC interim meeting scheduled for Bethesda, Maryland, January 11-14, 1999. At that time, a subcommittee of the Accrediting Authority Committee will meet with a subcommittee of the Accrediting Process Committee and decide upon the exact portion of Section 6.8 that is to be transferred to Chapter 4.

The committee discussed for an extended period of time the following issues regarding oversight of the NELAP policies and operational practices:

- Are the current qualifications of the assessment team members sufficient? (See Action Item 6 in Attachment A to the summary of the June 30, 1998 committee meeting.)
- How do we incorporate the requirements of ISO 61 (oversight of NELAP) into the NELAC standards?
- This committee’s involvement in the content of the Accrediting Authority (AA) Assessor Training Program.
- Consistency of AA program assessments.
- ELAB’s comments on adding oversight of NELAP to AARB’s responsibilities and tasks.

No decisions were made on these issues. The committee felt that more discussion and input is needed for the committee to come to consensus on these important concerns. The committee decided to schedule a teleconference in early December, 1998, and devote the entire time to discussion of this topic. The committee also envisions that the bulk of its meeting time at the interim meeting will be devoted to these concerns.

## **CONCLUSION**

Mr. Anderson was directed to schedule another teleconference meeting of the Accrediting Authority Committee during the first week of December, 1998.

This meeting concluded at 3:00 p.m. EST.

**ACTION ITEMS  
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 5, 1998**

<b>Ite m No.</b>	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Date To Be Completed</b>
1.	Discuss with Accreditation Process Committee the disposition of standards for the use of logos and trademarks as set forth at section 6.8.	1/12/99
2.	Arrange for another teleconference committee meeting for the first week in December, 1998.	11/12/98

**PARTICIPANTS  
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 5, 1998**

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